

Spiritual Correctness

"But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel" (Psalm 22:3). Put that in your own computer and you will find a similar thing that I did: there are a lot of red lines under it. What does that mean? People just simply do not talk like that anymore. However, the message that David is expressing in this Messianic psalm is power packed with expressions that display grief, trust, and praise. His words shine forth as the very epitome of a body stricken with the harshest of persecutions but clinging to a faith that can not be shattered -- the same faith that we ourselves should also possess. And while we may harbor the same kind of things discussed in this psalm, 16th century language is usually not the mode in which we express them. So how do we talk about them?

In a world that is so jammed with spirituality and religion, it becomes easy for us sometimes to shy away from expressing things commonly associated with denominationalism -- phrases such as "prayer life," "trusting in God," and even "fellowship" become taboo subjects because of our fear of either misusing them or misrepresenting what they are. But God calls on us not to fear these things, but embrace them after we have a proper understanding of what they are. In 2 Timothy 1:6-8, Paul calls on the young evangelist to remember the gift (probably a spiritual gift) that he was given to use for the ministry, and Paul tells him two things. First, he reminds Timothy to "*kindle afresh*" the gift that was in him, signifying that he should stir it up and use it, making it the most effective that it can be in service to God. But secondly, Paul reminds him to "*not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord,*" a phrase that will bring to mind his other words in Romans 1:16-17. What Paul wants Timothy to understand is that belief and obedience to God is not something to shrink from, but to embrace it with both arms for the blessed salvation that it is.

You may be thinking to yourself, "Brady, what's the point?" To that I bring up this illustration. Not too long ago I saw a young man that had recently started rekindling his own faith, and in response to something an older person said to him about his future, he said, "I'm really working on trusting God more with my life." Though the phrase was not unscriptural, it was uncommon, and caused the older person to react in a way so as to make the younger believe that he had said something wrong. But did he? Absolutely not, but rather responded in a way that should cause appreciation and love for his condition. In the epistles, Paul makes mention all the time about the graces and the mercies and the lovingkindness that God has given him, his letters overflowing with such "unique" statements, showing that he truly is "not ashamed."

My first year at SFA, when I had just started to get to know everyone, one of the guys invited me and the rest of the college group to his house for a "prayer meeting." While this seemed weird at the beginning, I found it to be one of the highlights of the year, with all of us gathered together in spiritual fellowship and discussing the things that we were praying to God about individually and as a group. Reading more into the book of Acts, you can find this kind of thing to be commonplace. In Acts 12, when Peter was freed from prison, the first place he went to was the house of Mary, where the disciples were gathered in prayer. In Acts 16, Paul finds a group of women that gathered by the riverside -- to pray. Later in that same chapter, when Paul and Silas were in prison, we find them -- you guessed it -- praying.

Brethren, this is not an article suggesting that we implement prayer more in our everyday lives, but rather a broader plea that we restore God to His rightful place: at the forefront of our everyday lives. While we may not be using 16th century language to discuss Him anymore, where have our mentions of Him as a real, living Being gone? Do we only talk about Him on Sunday in our hymns when we say that He is first in our lives, or do we think on Him daily? When someone has a problem, do we suggest self-help books first, or do we offer to pray with them? When we go through a time of trial, do we open up to others about our struggles with sin and ask for help, or do we cover it up, afraid to discuss it because it might be "hokey"? The Christian fellowship that we should enjoy as brothers and sisters is one where we express our struggles, our fears, our joys, and our hopes, all in a spiritual context, openly and freely with one another (Deuteronomy 6:8).

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